

From production to use: what are the harms of a drug?



Drugs are often produced abroad.

Key questions:

- Who might be involved in producing drugs?
- How are they likely to be treated/paid?
- What impact might drug production have on the country?
- How can people reduce the impact of drug use on developing countries?



The drug is imported into the UK through organised criminal gangs or drug mules.

Key questions:

- Why might someone become a 'drug mule' (someone who transports illegal drugs)?
- What impact might the importation of drugs have on the environment?
- What might criminal gangs gain from this? What further impacts might this have?
- How can people get help if they are approached about or have become involved in gang activity?



The drug is bought and sold on the streets of the UK.

Key questions:

- Who might be selling or delivering the drugs?
- What impact might drug dealing have on the local community?
- How can people get help if they have become involved in this activity?



An individual in the UK takes the drug.

Key questions:

- What impact might this have on the individual?
- What impact might regular use of the drug have?
- Are there any further impacts on others from an individual's drug taking?

	Key learning
<p>Drugs are often produced abroad.</p>	<p>a)/ b)/ c) Those involved in producing the drug may be mistreated and poorly paid. Most of the demand for substances comes from countries outside those where the drugs are produced, and much of the drug-related income is made in those destination countries.¹</p> <p>As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, more farmers may increase or take up illicit crop cultivation, either because State authorities may be less able to exert control or because more people may have to resort to illicit activities due to the economic crisis.²</p> <p>There are UK sources for some drugs – production of these also has an impact on environment, e.g. light and heat required for growing cannabis, as well as legal impacts etc. There has also been an increase in the production of synthetic substances – these are substances that are made in a laboratory to mimic a drug. They are not controlled or checked for safety and some have much higher levels of psychoactive content than the drug they mimic, increasing the potential risks.</p> <p>d) People could support other economic development in developing countries, for example by purchasing other legal produce and supporting schemes like Fairtrade. They could also try to raise awareness of worldwide issues within their local communities/schools.</p>
<p>The drug is imported into the UK through organised criminal gangs or drug mules.</p>	<p>a) People who are in a position of socio-economic disadvantage may become involved in transporting drugs to make a living (the economic difficulties caused by the COVID-19 crisis may exacerbate this).³ People may also be recruited into drug trafficking organisations or be sold to drug traffickers and forced to transport drugs (trafficking in human beings is linked to drug trafficking in many countries).⁴</p> <p>b) There are environmental impacts from transporting drugs, including the damage caused by all forms of travel by land, air and maritime routes.</p> <p>c) Criminal gangs gain financially from transporting drugs, and using ‘drug mules’ reduces the risk of them being personally caught by authorities. Gangs will also gain greater power in certain areas due to the financial and social power drug trafficking may bring.</p> <p>d) If people are approached to become a drug mule, they should contact the police. Individuals should try to avoid becoming involved in gang activity, or if already involved, access support from the police, support services such as Childline, friends/family/personal support networks, specialist local gangs support groups etc. See Gangs: Managing risks and staying safe lesson pack for further guidance.</p>

1 <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Covid-19-and-drug-supply-chain-Mai2020.pdf>

2 <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Covid-19-and-drug-supply-chain-Mai2020.pdf>

3 <https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Covid-19-and-drug-supply-chain-Mai2020.pdf>

4 https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/system/files/publications/12078/20192630_TDO319332ENN_PDF.pdf

	Key learning
<p>The drug is bought and sold on the streets of the UK.</p>	<p>a) Some drugs are sold on the streets, while others are sold online. Many people say they get drugs via friends, but this is still classed as supplying drugs and their friend will still have had to obtain the drug from an illegal source.</p> <p>Some gangs and organised criminal networks exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) drugs and money from the sale of those drugs. Often this involves a person travelling to other parts of the country, which increases the risks to the person transporting such goods (often known as county lines drug transportation). Gangs often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons, to get people to transport drugs for them.¹ This enables offenders to maximise their profits yet reduce the risk of their criminal activity as it distances them from the supply transaction – it is usually the person transporting the drugs who gets caught.²</p> <p>Remind students of the legal consequences associated with being charged with possession, supply or intent to supply an illegal drug, which often include an unlimited fine and/or a prison sentence. For more information, see the Year 10–11 Knowledge Organiser.</p> <p>b) Damage can be caused to the reputations of communities in which the drugs are sold, and this illegal activity can make these communities feel like less safe places to live.</p> <p>c) Individuals should try to avoid becoming involved in gang activity, or if already involved should access support from the police, support services such as Childline, friends/family/personal support networks, specialist local gangs support groups etc. See Gangs: Managing risks and staying safe lesson pack for further guidance.</p>
<p>An individual in the UK takes the drug.</p>	<p>a)/ b) The impact on the individual might include harms to their health, relationships, job, finances, safety etc., as explored in other lessons in this scheme.</p> <p>It is important to note that harms to an individual can occur, but the worst consequences will only happen to a minority of people who use drugs. The likelihood of serious harm depends on other factors. However, everyone is at risk from legal consequences, and the effects of many drugs are unpredictable, so it is impossible to know whether a person is likely to have a serious adverse reaction to a substance. Therefore, the healthiest and safest option is to not use substances.</p> <p>c) If an individual’s drug use develops to become more frequent or problematic, it is likely to have wider impacts on their friends, family and even local services such as police and hospitals.</p>

5 <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

6 <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/257-county-lines-drug-supply-vulnerability-and-harm-2018/file>

**TURNING
POINT**
inspired by possibility



Provides free support for young people who feel that their alcohol or other drug use is becoming a problem, and those who have queries about substances.

Turning Point offers young people:

- ✓ meetings where they feel comfortable
- ✓ advice and information about drugs and alcohol
- ✓ support with the changes the young person wants to make
- ✓ the chance to learn new ways to cope
- ✓ help to cut down, quit and gain control

withyou

We are with you



provides confidential support with alcohol, drugs or mental health.



has 80 local services in England and Scotland (including young people's services).



provides online support with their team to help with drug or alcohol advice for a young person, or to support a friend or relative.

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Can be contacted about anything – they are there to support young people and help them find ways to cope.

In addition to information and advice on a range of topics, they offer the following services:

- Anyone can call Childline free on 0800 1111 – it's confidential and the caller does not have to give their name if they don't want to.
- They offer a 1-2-1 online counsellor chat.
- An email can be sent to them – they will try to reply within 24 hours.
- A person can get help from other young people on their message boards.



**Let's
do this**



NHS Stop Smoking Services

- Local stop smoking services are free, friendly and can massively boost a person's chances of quitting for good.
- These services, staffed by expert advisers, provide a range of proven methods to help people quit. They'll give accurate information and advice, as well as professional support, during the first few months of an individual stopping smoking.
- An individual will normally be offered a one-to-one appointment with an adviser, but many areas also offer group and drop-in services as well.
- Depending on where the person lives, the venue could be a local GP surgery, pharmacy, high-street shop, or even a mobile bus clinic.
- GPs can refer people, or they can phone their local stop smoking service themselves to make an appointment with an adviser.

[Better Health – Quit Smoking](#)



- The National Association for Children of Alcoholics (www.nacoa.org.uk) provides information, advice and support for everyone affected by a parent's drinking.
- They can be contacted via their free confidential helpline (0800 358 3456), or via email, for information and ongoing support for all ages.
- Additionally, their online message boards enable young people to share and discuss experiences with others.

www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking



Family member or friend

Could provide emotional support and guidance and could help someone access further services.



GP

Can provide confidential medical advice and may refer someone for treatment or prescribe treatment options.

Many GP surgeries host support services such as smoking cessation and mental wellbeing inputs.



Teachers/other staff members

- Help students to find appropriate further support.
- They are available for students to raise their concerns with or to ask questions about drugs.
- Teachers can listen to concerns, but may also need to share this with the designated safeguarding lead if they are concerned about any student's safety (this is known as their safeguarding duty).

1. I have been smoking now for a couple of years, but recently have been thinking about quitting. The problem is, I have no idea where to start! My best friend smokes, so it's difficult to avoid and I don't think he'll give me the encouragement I need.



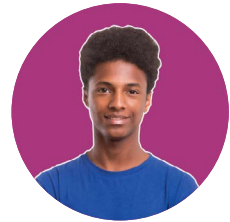
2. I am worried about a friend who has started taking drugs at the weekend. She started hanging around with some new people who I think are pressurising her into it – I'm not sure she even enjoys it that much!



3. We recently had a death in the family and my brother hasn't taken it very well. He won't talk about anything, but spends a lot of time alone in his room or out with his friends until late. I know he has been taking some pills – I saw them in his room – but I don't know if I should tell anyone.



4. I have been out partying a lot lately. I've often drunk alcohol and taken drugs, but lately I've been feeling jittery and my anxiety seems to be getting worse. Going out is a big part of my life though and I don't want to stop.



5. My parents have always enjoyed having a few drinks, but recently I've noticed that Dad has been drinking a lot more before Mum gets home from work. He seems to start drinking earlier and earlier in the day and now when I get in from school, he's usually already drunk.



6. I used to smoke weed sometimes with my friends but have started doing it when I'm by myself too. It started as a way to relieve some stress, but now I feel like I need something when I wake up in the morning to help me get through the day. I've heard some vapes have a synthetic form of cannabis in them but I'm not sure if they are safe to use instead. I want to get some help, but I'm too shy to speak about everything in front of others.



7. I have been struggling with my health for a while. I've discussed this with a doctor, and they've referred me to a specialist, but I don't know how long it'll be before I'll actually get their help. I keep seeing adverts on social media about some tablets that sound like they could help me, and am wondering if I should just order some while I'm waiting...



